

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 01443 122221Z

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3279

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PN SCUL PINT

SUBJ: OPPOSITION ATTEMPTS TO PUBLISH NEWSPAPER

1. A NEW NEWSPAPER, LA OPINION PUBLICA, WAS TO HAVE MADE ITS APPEARANCE ON PANAMA CITY'S NEWSSTANDS FRIDAY, MARCH 7. THE NEWSPAPER BACKERS AND PUBLISHERS, ALL SIGNATORIES OF THE "MANIFESTO OF THE 111" CRITICIZING THE GOP'S CONDUCT OF CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS, HAD INFORMED THE MIAMI HERALD IN TIME FOR THE HERALD TO RUN A STORY DATELINED PANAMA ON MARCH 6 THAT THE NEW PAPER WAS SCHEDULED TO APPEAR MARCH 7. THE HERALD'D HEADLINE WAS "TEST OF FREE PRESS EXPECTED" AND THE ACCOMPANYING STORY REFERRED TO A RECENT STATEMENT BY BRIG. GEN. OMAR TORRIJOS THAT "THERE IS FREEDOM OF THE PRESS HERE."

2. THE DIRECTOR OF THE GOP'S DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE TOLD PAO THAT HIS MINISTER HAD REQUESTED THAT HE CLOSE THE PAPER ON THURSDAY, MARCH 6 PRIOR TO PUBLICATION OF ITS FIRST ISSUE. THE REASON GIVEN WAS THAT THE PUBLISHERS HAD FAILED TO COMMUNICATE THEIR INTENT TO PUBLISH TO THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE AND THE EDITOR HAD NOT REGISTERED AS A JOURNALIST - BOTH OF WHICH ARE REQUIRED BY LAW.

3. COMMENT. SOURCE IN MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE HAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HINTED THAT GOP WILL PREVENT PUBLICATION OF THIS OPPOSITION

PAPER.
JORDEN

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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